

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 31-54 and 56-60 are pending in the present application, Claim 55 was previously canceled without prejudice. Claims 31, 34, and 47 have been presently amended. No new matter was added.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 31-36, 38-43, 47, 48, 50-54, and 56-60 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as anticipated by England (U.S. Patent No. 6,144,991); Claims 37, 44, 46, and 49 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over England in view of Tang et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,793,365, hereinafter Tang); and Claim 45 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over England in view of Kakuta et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,714,965, hereinafter Kakuta).

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the courtesy of Examiner Shaw and Supervisory Examiner Vaughn to interview this case with Applicants' representative on January 23, 2007 during which time the issues in the outstanding Office Action were discussed as substantially summarized hereinafter.

As discussed during the interview, Applicants disclose a method and system which permits a user to have access to other persons with interest in common. Such groups defined in the specification as "worlds" provides a basis for creation of contact between users on an open computer network. See specification, pages 10 and 11.

The system and method of Claims 31 and 47 as clarified define the associating of an addressed Internet site (i.e., a first information site) with persons who are accessing the same web page or who are accessing a plurality of common web pages (i.e., the first and second users) and providing on that basis an identity of the users for communication to each other on an open network.

As clarified, the system of Claim 3 includes:

a first terminal *associated with a first user* and configured to access a first information site and to acquire a client program from a management unit;

said client program reads an internet address of the first information site in a web crawler of said first terminal;

said client program sends a message to said management unit, said message includes the internet address of the first information site;

said management unit is configured to access a database and determine a collection of web pages containing related information and associated with the internet address of the first information site;

said management unit is configured *to identify a second user at a second terminal accessing at least one of the web pages of the collection;*

said first terminal is further configured to receive *an IP address of the second terminal from the management unit* and conduct *a communication from the first user to the second user based on the received IP address.*

[Emphasis added.]

These features are not shown in England.

As discussed during the interview, England discloses (in the view of the examiners) whiteboards and group tour packages which permit users of a web page to have access to a pre-determined set of web page data and to know in the case of whiteboards the identities of the contributors to the whiteboard contents.

Regarding guided tours, England discloses at col. 14, that:

A guided tour of the WWW is another application. A guide can record a set of tours and any number of users (i.e. clients and guides) can later follow the tour. Typically, the tour will be accompanied by an audio and/or video track describing the places that the guide is taking the client. The tours can be organized so that a client can join the tour in progress or can start a recorded tour on demand. Clients can drop out of a tour to explore on their own at any point.

England further discloses at col. 15, that:

Session program 1302 is used for session construction and administration. Session program 1302 is multifunctional, depending on client's/clients' request(s), and includes these options to: create a live session; start a stored session; list active sessions, allow clients to join already running sessions; list the guide and/or clients participating in a session; remove a session and all connected users; and/or remove a client from a session.

Regarding whiteboards, England discloses at col. 32 that:

Shared Whiteboard: The guide can construct a collaborative tool such as a shared whiteboard that both the client and the guide can view on their browsers (i.e. remotely displayable frame 1010 of director application 1306 for the guide and client Web browser 1312 for the client). The whiteboard can be enabled through a menu entry or alternatively, through a hot-key sequence. Any user of a session can draw on his local copy of the displayed Web page and have his annotations appear to all of the other users. Typically for this feature to be useful, it is necessary for the Web browser in remotely displayable frame 1010 of director application 1306 and the client Web browser 1312 to be the same size. Alternatively, the pages should be authored with style-sheets or other strong formatting information which allows more control over the frame layout and enables Web pages to look the same on any browser.

The shared whiteboard can be a method for supporting freehand drawing on top of an existing Web page in an unmodified Web browser which many remote participants (i.e. clients) can participate in the unique annotation. The shared whiteboard can be constructed on top of the Web browsers of the clients and guides. The guide can use the whiteboard to mark up any underlying Web page.

These features in England fail to disclose or suggest a system where a first terminal receives an IP address of a second user accessing related web pages to that accessed by the first user and thereafter conducts a communication from the first user to the second user based on the received IP address. Rather, the communication between users sharing whiteboard content in England only exists by way of the intermediary whiteboard IP address.

Besides guided tours and whiteboards, England discloses the use of chat programs. The Office Action identifies from the background of England that chat programs are collaborative tools to increase the level of communications between users in a telecommunications network. See col. 5, lines 10-15. However, there is no specific disclosure in England for a terminal that:

- 1) receives an IP address of a second user from a management unit that identifies the second user accessing at least one of the web pages of the collection which the first user is accessing, and

- 2) conducts a communication from the first user to the second user based on the received IP address, as defined in the present claims.

Rather, similar to the whiteboard communications, the chat programs in England direct communications through the guide to the users. In specific examples, company AdaptX acting as a guide communicates to users of the guide (i.e., clients) requesting information on AdaptX, a program specialist acting as a guide communicates to users of the guide having software questions, and a teacher acting as the guide communicates to users of the guide (i.e., students) having questions for the teacher. See England, col. 12, lines 57-65; col. 13, lines 51-57; and col. 14, lines 16-28.

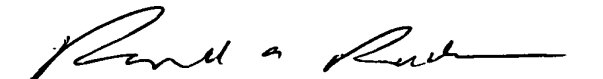
Hence, England fails to disclose the system or method recited in Claims 31 and 47, respectively. Furthermore, the deficiencies in England are not overcome by Tang and Kakuta.

In view of the above-noted distinctions, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 31 (and the claims dependent thereon) patentably distinguish over the applied references. Furthermore, Claim 47, although of a different statutory class, is similar to Claim 31. Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 47 (and the claims dependent thereon) patentably distinguish over the applied references, for at least the reasons stated for Claim 31.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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